[Shri Ajit Panja]

against tax evasion. This will continue. That is why, we are making the 1st of April of a particular year as the accounting year.

SHORT DURATION DISCUSSION

Brutal repression of Palestinian people by the Israeli army in the occupied Arab territories on West Bank and Gaza Strip

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now we shall take up the Short Duration Discussion. Mr. Anand Sharma to initiate the discussion.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE (West Bengal): How long will this Snort Duration Discussion be?

SHRI ANAND SHARMA (Himachal Pradesh): I entirely agree with Prof. Nirmal Chatterjee. But it is important.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: This important thing will take us up to 10 P. M.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH (West Bengal): The entire House should have a voice.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Madam, to begin with, I would like to associate myself with the objections raised by Shri Dipen Ghosh and Prof. Chatterjee. It has been an agonising wait to inform the House of the agony of the people of Palestine, particularly in the occupied territories. It has been a subject of great relevance and importance, a subject which concerns the people of India and all those who support the just cause of Palestine in the rest of the world. Madam, it is very unfortunate that this is the last item on the List of Business and I would like to put on record my personal unhappiness as I was expecting this to be taken up earlier.

Madam, this discussion is primarily aimed at high-lighting the sufferings of the people of Palestine and Arabs in the occupied territories of West Bank and the Gaza strip. It is over four months now since this territory exploded, in an open rebellion of the people there against the repression, against the exploitation and against the discrimination of the illegal occupier the State of Israel. Today the entire world is shocked over the manner in which the Israeli Military and the Israeli Government has dealt with this burning issue, dealt with an issue which primarily involves the basic human rights, an issue which concerns not only West Asia but the entire World.

Madam, the tragedy of the people of Palestine has, perhaps, been the worst tragedy of history, and the worst tragedy of this century also. It was over 40 years ago that the happiness of these people was snatched away when a State was created on religious ground, one people were given a homeland and the Palestinian people were deprived of their homes. They were driven away from their land. Their freedom was snatched away. In these 40 years they have been persecuted and hounded both by the Israeli army and their agents. And in spite of this, the struggle continues. They continue to struggle for their homeland, for the restoration of the inalienable human rights, the right to live in their homeland with freedom and dignity.

Madam, it is ironic that a State and people who asks for the sympathy of the rest of the world because of what was done to them by Hitler, because they were the victims of Hilter's fascism and Hitler's crimes, that very State, those very people today stand in the dock for committing worst crimes against the Palestinian people, against the Arabs in the Occupied territory. The State of Israel always raised the bogey of Arab fear, the bogey of possible Arab invasions to annex the territories in the West Bank and Gaza. It is over 20 years when these territories were annexed. And what has been the

situation there? Why is this outburst today? Why is this open rebellion today? It is not merely an unrest. It is because these people—more than a million—have been treated virtually like slaves. They are the ones who provide cheap labour to the Israelis. They go out to work but they are not allowed to live in any other part of the cuntry. They have to come back. These areas, the occupied territories have become the market of the Israeli produce. This is the exploitation which has been going on. And in addition to that, the population has been increasing, the living conditions have been deteriorating. There was simmering discontent. But the State of Israel did not learn any lesson from history. They continued with his policy. And what we fined is that today Israel is virtually in on position to continue its occupation of these territories. These territories have become unmanageable. It is a watershed in the struggle of the Palestinian people. Nothing short of that. Madam, the government of Israel has failed to understand the human requirements. They also forgot that in these 22 years a new generation has come up, a new generation of Palestinians and Arabs. Those who were born after the occupation. They had seen only this subjugation, they had seen only this exploitation, but they are young, they were not prepared to resign their future to fatalistic passivity and they have reacted. It is an uprising of an enslaved people, who are yearning to break the shackles of slavery, the shackles colonisation. How the government of Israel has reacted. They have resorted to the worst and most barbaric forms of repression. They resorted to firing and teargassing and when these things failed. they started clubbing the people, beating them with shoes and rifle butts, because those who were protesting were unarmed, particularly the young people the teenagers, who came out in thousands and bared their chests before the bullets. More than hundred people have died. Thousands have been arrested. Thousands have been injured. The entire world is stunned. But Israel continues with the repression. For the last few days there is a virtual siege in the area. People are not allowed to move out or allowed to go in. Fuel supplies have been cut off, Israel has failed to listen to the call of humanity. They have shown their criminal defiance of the United Nations Resolutions and this is what we condemn.

Madam, one thing is very clear. After all these developments things will never be the same again either for the State of Israel or for Arabs in the occupied territories or for the supporters of Israel, be it the United States of America or other collaborators of Zionists. We particularly object to the manner in which the American Government has dealt with this matter when Government after Government condemned the Israeli barbarism, the United States also initially shed crocodile tears when they voted for one U.N. Resolution censuring Israel, but after that they have bent backwards to appease these tormentors. They have vetoed the Resolution in the Security Council which merely asked Esrael to respect human rights in the occupied territories. They have vetoed this Resolution on human rights, though they have always claimed to be the champions of human rights. Not only that, Madam. On one hand, they have said that they are interested in peace in West Asia, but what has happpened is that they have timed this with ordering the closure of the PLO office in the United Nations. It is a breach of contract. The United Nations is a world body. It functions on the American soil. But there is a contract. there is an understanding and the PLO office has been functioning there for a very long time. But when these atrocities are mounting, instead of sympathising with those with whom the rest of the world sympathises, the Government of Amrica orders the closure of the PLO office. This shows how insincere they are about peace in West Asia, and all their efforts through various Missions which

[Shri Anand Sharma]

have been there sending representatives to Gaza Strip, sending representatives to Jordan and Egypt, giving an impression to the world as if they are the ones who are going to solve this issue.

Madam Deputy Chairman, one thing is clear. There cannot be any peace in West Asia unless and until the Palestinian question is steeled, and satisfaction of the PLO. It is here of Palestine, those who are suffering in the occupied territories, and to the satisfaction of the PLO. It is here where the proposal to have a UN-sponsored international conference on Palestine, the participation of Super Powers, the PLO and Israel, have become more relevant, and even those who were initially opposed to this proposal are today agreeable to it. But again, the U.S. though in favour of a conference, objects to the very presence of PLO. It wants a conference excluding PLO. I would like to assert here that there cannot be a conference without the PLO, because PLO is the sole and authentic representative of the people of Palestine. If any conference is held without PLO, it will be a farce. Madam one can only hope that with the recent developments, those who have been opposing a very just cause of the people of Palestine will see to reason and change their attitude. And about the state of Israel, it is too late for them. As I said, those territories have become unmanageable. It is a virtual cul-de-sac; It is a blind alley for them. They have nowhere to go as far as Israelis are concerned, because they have held it for too long. They have kept their eyes closed all these years. Madam there are more than one million Arabs in these occupied territories, and another 7,50,000 in Israel. If Israel formalises annexation of these territories, the Jews will be in a minority in a State created for them, and if they don't do it, it will be a situation like what we have in the aparthied South Africa where the majority is denied the fundamental human rights. Israel is in no position to expel these people, is in no position to formalise annexation. There is only one way. It has to vacate and leave the occupied territories. There is no other way; otherwise, the day is not far when Israel itself will be plunged in such a vortex of violence that it will be impossible for itself or for its supporters to extricate it from that situation. I would like to place on record the consistent support of the Government and the people of India to the just cause of Palestine. Not only that we were very much opposed to the creation of a State in 1948 on religious grounds, but we did not recognise it and do not have any relations with them. Today I would like to urge the Government, through the Minister of External Affairs, to convey our sentiments to the U.N. Security Council, to convey these sentiments to the U.S. Government, and also to consider the possibility of extending support, relief and help to the besieged people in the refugee camps, to the besieged people in the occupied territories.

With these words, I urged all my colleagues to condemn this atrocity with one voice, and let us once again reiterate our solidarity with the cause of the people of Palestine. Thank you.

8.00 P.M.

SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY (West Bengal): Madam Deputy Chairman, I rise to express our party's support to the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people. I associate myself with the views expressed by Shri Anand Sharma who has raised this discussion. I extend my greetings to the fighters, the brave fighters, of Palestine who are fighting for their liberation, who for fighting for their freedom and who are fighting for an opportunity to develop themselves.

Madam, the fight is going on since 1948 when the United Nations resolved to allow the Palestinians to have 40 per cent

of the area. But soon after the UN Resolution, the Israeli forces grabbed 70 per cent of the area and thus made it impossible for the Palestinians to have a homeland of their own. Since then, the struggle is going on. During all these years, thousands of Palestinians, men, women and children, have died. They are undergoing a lot of suffering They are fighting to have a homeland for them. For all their sufferings, we must condemn the United States of America which is the main force behind Israel and which is encouraging Israel to commit atrocities against the Palestinian people. Now, Madam, the United States of America has committed, perhaps, the last ghastly act by declaring that they want to oust the PLO from he UN campus by threatening the closure of the PLO office. Of course this has been resisted by the UN and it has asked the PLO mission to stay on there in terms of a UN Resolution.

Madam, today, the Palestinian people are conducting, perhaps, the last leg of their liberation struggle. I hope, this uprising which began on December 8, 1987, will come to its logical end. This uprising is going on in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. In India, we, who have suffered under colonialism for more than two hundred years, who are engaged in a battle for upliftment of our lives, for our development, must support the struggle of the Palestinians. We must condemn imperialism and we must join hands with the Palestinian people in their strugle for liberation, in their struggle for freedom. Here, I take the opportunity to read out a statement which the President of the Palestine National Council, Sheikh Abdul Hamid-el-Sayegh, while visiting India, made at a Press conference on 15th March in New Delhi. I quote:

"This is a matter of deep concern for us. We believe that India's position is in support of us. We hope that any decision taken on this issue will consider that the game will take place at the same time as the uprising. This uprising has isolated the Zionist regime of Israel and we hope that the Indian Government will also increase this isolation in conformity with the stand of the non-aligned movement in all spheres; political social and cultural. We hope, the Indian Government and political parties which share our stand will not leave us alone when we need their solidarity now much more than previously and will not give Israel a window when we through our solidarity, have isolated it already. We appreciate India's sovereign right to take a decision on this matter but we must also stress India's moral and material responsibility not to allow such things."

Madam, I join with the President of the Palestine National Council and I would request the Government of India to take all necessary steps to make this uprising of the Palestinian people a success, to make Palesine a reality on the earth and to take all actions to thwart the imperialistic manoeuvres against the Palestinian sovereignty. On the fate of Palestine, on the fate of the uprising depends the future of the non-alignment movement. The non-alignment movement cannot remain isolated between imperialism and freedom struggle. It must take part on the side of the freedom struggle and fight against imperialism conclusively and finally.

PROF C. LAKSHMANNA (Andhra Pradesh): Madam Deputy Chairman, what is happening in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is one of the worst human tragedies. It is one of the worst repressions which have been unleashed by Israeli forces on the helpless Palestinians. Madam, if I cite a few instances, it will show how this repression is raising its head. In Al Balah Palestine refugee camp the Israeli forces have clamped curfew during the last several months. Similarly, they have maintained restrictions on the West Bank refugee camp of Batala where 8 Palestinians were shot and wounded by the security forces and 39 Arabs were shot dead by Israeils on December 9, 1987. On the whole

[Prof C. Lakshmanna]

about 100 Palestinians are killed and 7000 Palestinians are arrested during the last three months. This number gives the grotesque picture of the problem. It is not merely killing 100 people, it is not merely arresting 7000 people but more than 3 lakh Palestinians are starving in the refugee camps without medical aid and relief in the West Bank, etc.

Madam, these are the examples which go to prove how Israel is unleashing untold repression over the people. Any further delay in getting settlement of this problem will actually lead to the saying: Delay is a deadly form of denial. Too much analysis leads to paralysis. I think it is time for us not to indulge in analysis, it is time for us to initiate some action and urge some action on the part of the people.

Madam, there could be two types of solutions. One is the shortterm solution ,to plead for the deployment of UN peace keeping force in the occupied territories to provide protection to the Palestinians. This is a short-term measure which has to be taken. For the long-term solutions, I think we should ask for a UN Administrator to conduct fresh elections in the Israeli-occupied area so that we will know as to what the position of these Palestinian refugees there is. In these elections, obviously there has to be a role of PLO which is championing the cause of the Palestinians. In this connection, I am not surprised that US has come forward with a peace plan which cannot be accepted and that they are opposed to having voted in the U.N. even to the continuance of the PLO on the American soil because the character of UN is changing, with many third-world countries coming into the U.N. U.S. naturally has apprehensions that they will not be able to carry forward. So, there is the scope of scuttling the process of U.N.

I think this should be taken note of and it should be brought to the notice of the UN that they are taking unjust sand on the Palestinian refugee problem.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: Strengthening the UN should be our approach.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Madam, in this connection, I would urge the Government of India to mobilise more support from the people of India who are committed to the support for the Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip and West Bank and try to mitigate the untold miseries, which these Palestinian refugees are going through in these refugee camps. I think we should be able to organise at least some medical assistance and also food supplies for those who are starving, who are in millions. I hope these steps will be taken by Government of India and they will once again declare our solidiarity with the people of Palestine and the Arabs who are refugees now in their own homeland and try to get back for them their homeland without further delay, because as I mentioned earlier, delay is a deadly form of denial. I think any further delay will only mean they would be denied their rightful place on the West Bank.

SHRI P. N. SUKUL (Uttar Pradesh): Madam, as a result of the worst kind of repression, torture and brutalities unleashed by the forces of Israel on the Palestinian people in West Bank and Gaza strip during the past several years, what has started in the West Bank is not a mere uprising or rebellion as our hon. friend Shri Anand Sharma, said, but in the words of a Palestinian, it is the beginning of a revolution.

In the context of the occupied territories, including Palestine, what baffles people like us is that although this matter has been before the United Nations and the Human Rights Commission for the last four decades, the Israeli Government continues to persist with impunity in its inhuman and pernicious policy of stifling the most legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

[Shri P. N. Sukul]

been more systematically oppressed and humiliated in their own land. She admired the courage and perseverance with which the Palestinian people have been struggling for the liberation of their own land and recognition of their inalienable national rights under the leadership of the PLO. Here, it will be pertinent to quote her assessment of the situation. I quote:

"Israeli attempts to wipe out the Palestinian Movement canont succeed in the long run. A movement based on the legitimate aspirations of the people cannot be put down by the force of arms. History is replete with examples of the failure of military force to crush such popular movements."

Madam, as the matter stands, the people subject to continuing pain and bloodshed are looking for supjort from the international community. First of all, they want us to call upon Israel to end all its repressive actions forthwith. Then the Israel army must withdraw from the towns and refugee camps in the occupied territories. Free elections should be allowed in the municipalities, and expulsions, deportations demolitions, detentions, beatings and killings must be ended. Unless Israel strictly complies with the Charter principle of the non-use of force, a climate conducive to meaningful negotiations cannot be created. I personally feel that if Israel does not do so soon and continues to follow its inhuman policy vis-a-vis the Palestinians of the occupied territories, all the Arab countries must unite to give a benefitting lesson to Israel. All others must extend all possible support to the Arabs in this matter.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी (मध्य प्रदेश) : उपसभापति महोदया, पश्चिम एशिया के सवाल पर कोई लम्बी बहस करने का यह वक्त नहीं है । सारा देश इस राय का है कि इजरायल को अरबों के उस इलाके से हट जाना चाहिए जिस पर वह जबर्दस्ती कब्जा करके बैठा है । सारा देश इस राय का भी है कि फिलिस्तीनियों को अपने घर में आजादी के साथ जीवित रहने का अधिकार वापिस मिलना चाहिए । इजरायल आक्रमणकारी है । आक्रमण को नापने के अलग-अलग गज नहीं हो सकते । आक्रमणकारी को आक्रमण के फलों का उपयोग करने की छूट नहीं दी जा सकती है । वर्षों से इजरायल पश्चिमी किनारे पर गाजापट्टी में गोलान-हइट्स पर कब्जा जमाकर बैठा है । उसे यह इलाका खाली करना होगा । वर्षों से फिलिस्तीनी मारे-मारे फिर रहे हैं । उन्हें उनके घर से उजाड़ दिया गया, ठोकरें खाने के लिए मजबर कर दिया गया । बचपन में हम दुनिया का नक्शा देखते थे तो फिलिस्तीन एक अलग देश, एक अलग राज्य हुआ करता था । ऐसा लगता है मानो उसका नामोनिशान मिटाने की कोशिश की गयी है । यहूदियों को अपना राज्य मिल गया । नाजी अत्याचारों के दौर से उनको गुजरना पड़ा, लेकिन जैसा अन्य मित्रों ने कहा जो स्वयं जुल्म और सितम के दौर से गुजरे है, वे आज बेरहम होकर फिलिस्तीनियों पर जुल्म और सितम का कहर ढा रहे हैं । लेकिन दमन से आजादी की आग बुझगी नहीं बल्कि और फैलेगी । हम टेलीविजन पर देखते हैं--लड़के और लड़कियां किस बहादुरी से सामना कर रहे है । वे अपनी आजादी की लड़ाई लड़ रहे है । इजरायल के नेताओं को दीवार पर लिखा हुआ पढ़ना चाहिए और दमन बंद कर देना चाहिए पश्चिम एशिया की गुत्थी को सुलझाने के लिए एक अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सम्मेलन बुलाने का जो सुझाव है, उसे स्वीकार करके आगे बढ़ना चाहिए । यह ठीक है कि अरब देशों को भी इजरायल का अस्तित्व स्वीकार करना होगा । पी.एल.ओ. फिलिस्तीनियों का प्रतिनिधि संगठन है । कई मामलों में पी० एल० ओ० की नीतियों से मतभेद हो सकता है, लेकिन फिलिस्तीनियो के प्रतिनिधि के रूप में उस संगठन का बोलने का अधिकार छीना नहीं जा सकता और न पश्चिम एशिया की समस्या का कोई समाधान पी० एल० ओ० की सहायता के बिना, पी० एल० ओ० की भागीदारी के

Madam, I had a chance to attend the 43rd Session and also the 44th Session of the Human Rights Commission. This means that this year also I was there. This year the PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, also came and addressed the Commission. But the total helplessness of the United Nations in the matter has become more obvious. It is due mainly to certain countries like the USA who support Israel out and out in all possible ways. That is why the United States recently asked the PLO to wind up its mission in America, although that mission was invited not by America but by the UNO. That is why the Secretary-General of the U.N. has also taken up the matter with America and that is why the mission is staying on there.

The occupation is a serious violation of the human rights of the civilian population of the occupied territories. It has led to the illegal annexation of parts of occupied teritories including Jerusalem, imposition of Israeli laws, juridiction and administration on the Syrian Golan Heights, establishment of new settlements and expansion of existing ones, evacuation, expulsion, displacement and deportation of the indigenous Arab inhabitants and denial of their right to return, confiscation and expropriation of Arab property, destruction of Arab dwellings, physical transformation of historical sites, desecration of religious places, imposition of punitive finces, ill-treatment and torture of detainees, indiscriminate arrests and administrative detention ,including that the children, interference with religious freedom and the freedom of movement illegal exploitation of the national wealth and resources in the occupied territories and numerous other abuses. Since occupation, Israel has been trying its level best to alter the ethnic and demographic composition of the occupied territories, to change their legal status, to swamp out the identity of the original inhabitants of the area and by denying the availability of means to development to destrov the very basis of physical existence of these people. The latest report of the Commission's Sub-Committee to investigate Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the population of the occupied territories, concludes in its annual review that there has been great intensification in the climate of tension and violence already prevailing in the occupied territories. The report documents a whole range of human rights violations such as the establishment of settlements, expropriation of property and transfer of Israeli citizens to the occupied territories harassment of civilians, collective punishment, including demolition of houses expulsions and deportations, more and more arrests including the arrests of the minors and children, administrative detention, and abuse and torture of those arrested or detained.

It is no doubt a most disquieting paradox that the Jews who had themselves suffered a lot before the signing of the San Francisco Charter and had been victims of the Fascist terror, brutality and persecution before the Second World War, have now themselves been inflicting systematically similar torture and torment on the Palestinian people.

Since the creation of Israel, Madam, there has been continued and inexorable territorial expansion of the State of Israel which has been diversing the original Palestinian people of their lands, of their fundamental rights and other freedoms.

No just and durable solution can be found to this problem unless Israel withdraws or is made to withdraw totally and unconditionally from all Palestinian and Arab territories occupied by it since 1967 including Jersusalem and the Palestinian people really enjoy their inalienable rights including the right to return, the right to self-determination without extnal interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty and the right to establish an independent Palestinian State in its homeland, Palestine.

Our late Prime Minister Mr. Indira Gandhi, had looked upon the plight of the Palestinian people as one of the greatest tragedies of modern history. She was of the view that few people had

बिना हो सकता है। मैं नहीं जानता इस संबंध में भारत सरकार जो कुछ कर रही है उससे अधिक और क्या कर सकती है। अमरीका का रवैया सचमुच में खेदजनक है। क्या इसका कारण यह है कि अमरीका में चुनाव होने वाले हैं और यहूदी वोटों की चिंता वहां के राजनेताओं को सवार है? जो दुनिया भर में मानव अधिकारों के अलम्बरदार बनकर घूमते हैं क्या उन्हें दिखायी नहीं देता कि पश्चिम एशिया और गाजापट्टी में किस तरह से मानव अधिकारों का उल्लंघन हो रहा है?

सरकार कूटनीतिक तरीके से अगर और दबाव ला सकती है और दमन और आतंक के इस दौर को बंद कर सकती है तो उसे जरूर प्रयत्न करना चाहिए। सारे देश की और विशेषकर अपनी पार्टी की ओर से मैं कहना चाहता हूं कि हमारी एकजुटता उनके साथ है जो अपनी आजादी के लिए लड़ रहे है, जो विदेशी आक्रमण के खिलाफ कंधे से कंधा लगाकर संघर्ष कर रहे है। अच्छा होता यह चर्चा किसी और समय होती, लेकिन मैं श्री आनंद शर्मा को धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूं कि देर से हो सही, ऐन वक्त पर आखिरी वक्त पर सही, उन्होंने यह चर्चा उठाई।

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): Madam Deputy Chairman, I am grateful to my young colleague, Shri Anand Sharma for bringing up this matter for discussion in the House. May I respectfully congratulate Atal Bihariji on the very statesman like and solid observations that he has made on an issue on which there is unanimity in the entire country. The absence of members here should not give anybody the impression that those of us who are here do not speak for the entire country on a matter of this kind. Other hon. Members too expressed their agony and their anger and their disapproval of what Israel is doing in Gaza and the West Bank the total denial of basic human rights, the use of the military. Israel Defence Force, the Border Police, the Civilian Police and the General Security Services also known as Shinbeth have mercilessly beaten Palestinians, broken their bones, kidnapped some illegally and detained many of them. They have been subjected to heavy physical and psychological pressures to extract confessions

Thus, I would go on with the litany of the misdeeds of the Government which calls itself civilised. As hon. Members have observed Jews suffered a great deal during the holocaust in the Second World War. That they should be perpetrating similar atrocities on people on whose land they are sitting on illegally surpasses comprehension. The Government and the people of India are not against the Jewish people. They are against the expansionist militarist policies of the Government of Israel which it has followed ever since its foundation in May, 1948. We thoroughly disapprove in the strongest possible terms of what Israel is doing and particularly since December, 1987, more than 100 Palestinians have lost their lives for asking for their homeland, asking for their rights which are recognised by a vast majority of humankind by a vast majority of Members of the United Nations, by a vast majority of the Security Council of the United Nations. Only in one case has the United States elected to vote, against Israel. Other resolutions they have vetoed which as Vajpayeeji has said is a matter of regret and total incomprehension.

Israel must vacate their occupied territories of the Arabs. They must accept the proposal for the holding of an international conference which should be attended by the five permanent members of the Security council and all the parties involved in West Asia and the PLO.

As Vajpayeeji has said it is totally unrealistic for anybody to expect that an amicable and long lasting solution in this tragedy can be found in the absence of the PLO. They are a crucial element. They have made sacrifices and we have recognised them as the sole and authentic representative of the Arabs in that area. So for anybody to say that they are willing to have a truncated conference or a conference in which the PLO will not participate is only trying to prolong this

[Shri K. Natwar Singh]

tragedy and agony in that part of the world. Therefore, I would like to join all hon. Members in condemning what is happening in the West Bank and Gaza. The atrocities that are being perpetrated are totally unacceptable to all civilised people. Now the Government of India is not a Member of the Security Council. We are none-the-less keeping ourselves fully informed of what is happening there. Soon after the current uprising in the occupied territories broke out, we issued a statement on December 17, 1987, expressing our deep concern and grief at the loss of innocent lives and injuries to several others. The statement also condemned the Israeli acts of violence against the Palestinians and urged that these be halted forthwith. On February 6, 1988, the Prime Minister while receiving the PLO Ambassador and a group of Heads of Mission of the OAC countries conveyed once again India's condemnation of the Israeli atrocities and reiterated the unequivocal support of the Government and the people of India for the just Palestinian cause. The Prime Minister added that at a time when the world public opinion was increased at the senseless violence against the Palestinians in Israeli bondage, concerted efforts should be made at the UN, the NAM and other fora to seek a just and durable Palestinian settlement through the early convening of an international conference on the Middle-East under the ausipces of the United Nations with the participation of all parties concerned including the PLO. He assured them of India's full support to such a move. The Prime Minister, Madam, in response to a letter from the PLO Chairman, Yassar Arafat reiterated India's support to the Palestinian cause. Our support is also conveyed to His Excellency Sheikh Abdul Hameed El-Sayeh Speaker of the Palestine National Council, when he called on the Prime Minister during his visit to India earlier in the month at the head of PNC delegation at the invitation of our Parliament. India has coordinated and fully supported NAM sponsored resolution on this issue at the United Nations Security Council. Our permanent representative made two statements in the Security Council on the subject. We also participated in the debate on the issue of the Human Rights Commission and co-sponsored the resolution passed by the Commission. Consistent with this policy of support to the Palestinian people and in view of continuing Israeli atrocities against Palestinians in the occupied territories, India has, as the House knows, decided not to play Israel in the Davis Cup play off match at Tel Aviv which is scheduled to be held in April this year. This is likely to result in a heavy fine for the All India Tennis Association and a three year ban from the Davis Cup matches and possible disqualification from the Tennis event at this year's Olympics. But we have taken a stand on a political principle even if it means a sportsless. We have also decided to make a token humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians in the occupied territories worth Rs 5 lakhs of medicines and clothings. These are being routed through UNRRA.

Once again, Madam, I would like to thank the hon. Members who spoke on this subject.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: You have made no reference to your decision about the PLO. You have made no reference at all—the PLO's office is in US to the US decision against the United Nations accommodation of PLO office.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: No, I thought the hon. Members would know that we opposed it. The whole of the United Nations opposed it. It is against the agreement that has been signed that the headquarters of the United Nations, all Member States, observers, those who are entitled to be there, have to have their offices there and if the decision has been taken ,it has been disapproved by the entire world community.